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SUBJECT: WORLD BANK MEETING ON GUINEA, UPDATE

REF: CONAKRY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. In a July 3 meeting with the Charge d'Affaires and Econoff, World Bank Acting Director said that July 4-18 negotiations with the IMF and World Bank in Conakry to develop a draft program would provide the centerpiece for the July 24-25 Forum in Paris. The Bank is supporting this meeting by distributing invitations to invitees, and working with the IMF on the elaboration of a framework for discussion at the forum. According to the Bank official, Guinea hoped for broad participation in this consultation and review of its draft program with the IMF, and possibly for indications external support in so far as that would be possible. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Charge d'Affaires and Econoff met with the Acting Director of the World Bank, Mr. Zie Coulibaly, to discuss the upcoming conference on Guinea to be held July 24-25 in Paris. The Acting Director clarified that the World Bank is assisting Guinea with the Paris forum. The senior Bank officer in Guinea could not provide a list of participants as invitations are being handled by the Government of Guinea. However, Mr. Coulibaly did provide a tentative schedule for the conference. (provided septel)

¶3. (SBU) Organizations currently listed as speakers/presenters at the conference include the World Bank, the European Commission, the Special Representative of the European Union Presidency for the Mano River Region, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for West Africa. In addition, the Guinea Prime Minister, Lansana Kouyate, will attend and speak.

¶4. (SBU) The Acting Director further stated that the IMF negotiations with Guinea which begins tomorrow will be conducted jointly with the Bank. These negotiations will generate a baseline assessment of the current macroeconomic situation in Guinea which will then be used at the Paris conference. Mr. Coulibaly stated that the Government of Guinea will also present a draft document at the Paris conference outlining the countries urgent short-term needs, such as rehabilitation of local government infrastructures, and provision of electricity and water services. This document will present the Government of Guinea's case within the framework of the recent social and political events in Guinea. The Bank, and certainly the Government of Guinea, are hopeful that invitees will give the program a close review and indication of how their programs and interests may fit into the draft framework.

¶5. (SBU) Mr. Coulibaly stated that the structure of the Paris meeting is to inform the donor community of the current status of the Guinea aid program, and how each donor program could fit into the framework as it is developed. The senior country Bank official said that the meeting is not "formal";

however, it is not an "informal" one either. The Acting Director said that this process should result in the formulation of a realistic aid program, focused on the areas of debt relief, water, electricity and local government operations.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT. While the activity of elaborating a draft program with the IMF and World Bank and moving directly to a consultative process in Paris is packing much into a short period, the Prime Minister is embracing a serious process for elaborating a framework with which, hopefully the international community can begin working. Under the gun for allowing the transition process to drag, movement on this axis could help assist the broader transition process move forward, coupled with slower but certain progress on election processes. We believe it is in USG interest to support the Prime Minister's initiative with appropriate representation.
END COMMENT

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